

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (original) A process for producing rice flour, which comprises the steps of:

soaking material rice grains in water;

crushing the rice grains;

penetrating α,α -trehalose or maltitol into the crushed rice grains;

partially drying the resulting rice grains; and

milling the partially dried rice grains to produce a rice flour.

2. (original) The process of claim 1, wherein said material rice grains are raw rice grains selected from the group consisting of unpolished, polished, and sprouted rice grains.

3. (currently amended) The process of ~~claims 1 or 2~~ claim 1, wherein the crushing step is for cracking said unpolished rice grains or roughly crushing said polished rice grains.

4. (currently amended) The process of ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~ claim 1, wherein the penetration step is done by

using 3-20% (w/w) of α , -trehalose or maltitol to the weight of said material raw rice grains.

5. (currently amended) The process of ~~any one of claims 1 to 4~~ claim 1, wherein the penetration step is done by using α , α -trehalose or maltitol in the form of a powder or solution.

6. (currently amended) The process of ~~any one of claims 1 to 5~~ claim 1, the moisture content of rice in the partially drying step is controlled to 14-25% (w/w).

7. (currently amended) The process of ~~any one of claims 1 to 6~~ claim 1, which further contains a step of sieving rice flour to give an average particle size of 30-80 μm .

8. (currently amended) The process of ~~any one of claims 1 to 7~~ claim 1, wherein said rice flour is processed for producing bakery products or noodles.

9. (currently amended) A rice flour obtainable by the process of ~~any one of claims 1 to 8~~ claim 1.

10. (original) A premixed flour for producing bakery products, comprising the rice flour of claim 9.

11. (original) A fermented bakery product or noodle obtainable by using the rice flour of claim 9.

12. (new) The process of claim 2, wherein the crushing step results in cracking said unpolished rice grains or roughly crushing said polished rice grains.

13. (new) The process of claim 12, wherein the penetration step is done by using 3-20% (w/w) of α , α -trehalose or maltitol to the weight of said material raw rice grains.

14. (new) The process of claim 13, wherein the penetration step is done by using α , α -trehalose or maltitol in the form of a powder or solution.

15. (new) The process of claim 14, the moisture content of rice in the partially drying step is controlled to 14-25% (w/w).

16. (new) The process of claim 15, which further contains a step of sieving rice flour to give an average particle size of 30-80 μ m.

17. (new) The process of claim 16, wherein said rice flour is processed for producing bakery products or noodles.

18. (new) A rice flour obtainable by the process of claim 17.

19. (new) A premixed flour for producing bakery products, comprising the rice flour of claim 18.

20. (new) A fermented bakery product or noodle obtainable by using the rice flour of claim 18.